

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED POSS DUPE

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 NSC-05

CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00

COME-00 FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 XMB-04 OPIC-06

LAB-04 SIL-01 INT-05 /114 W
----- 130359

R 091222Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4674

INFO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

UNCLAS KUWAIT 0681

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, EMIN, KU, SU

SUBJ: MAJOR TRILATERAL INVESTMENT IN SUDAN ASBESTOS MINE
ANNOUNCED.

1. SHAIKH NASER AL-SABAH CHAIRMAN OF WORLD GULF ESTABLISHMENT WHICH PART OF KUWAIT BASED CONGLOMERATE GULF INTERNATIONAL ANNOUNCED IN PRESS CONFERENCE HERE FEB 7 THAT HIS COMPANY TOGETHER WITH GOS AND JOHNS MANVILLE OF DENVER INTEND TO MAKE MAJOR INVESTMENT IN SUDAN ASBESTOS MINE. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS PRODUCTION IS EXPECTED TO REACH 100,000 TONS PER YEAR AND PROJECT WILL INVOLVE \$116 MILLION IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT.

2. EMBOFF DISCUSSED INTEREST IN SUDANESE ASBESTOS WITH KHALIL OSMAN OF GULF INTERNATIONAL AND REPS OF JOHN MANVILLE AT IMPROMPTU AIRPORT MEETING IN EARLY JANUARY. JOHN MANVILLE REPS WERE PRIMARILY FROM CANADA, ALTHOUGH AT LEAST ONE DENVER-BASED OFFICIAL WAS ALSO PRESENT. GROUP WAS CLEARLY OPTIMISTIC OVER PROSPECTS IN SUDAN, BUT PROVIDED FEW DETAILS. IN SEPERATE CONVERSATION FEB 8 WITH INDIVIDUAL INVOLVED IN FINANCING KUWAITI SIDE OF PROJECT, EMBOFF WAS TOLD THAT SUDANESE ASBESTOS DEPOSITS MAY BE AMONG LARGEST IN WORLD. MOREOVER, DEPOSITS REPORTEDLY UNCLASSIFIED
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ARE RELATIVELY NEAR RED SEA AND THEREFORE COULD BE TRANSPORTED TO PORT SUDAN WITH LESS TROUBLE THAN IF DEPOSITS WERE DEEP IN

INTERIOR OF SUDAN.

3. COMMENT: WE, OF COURSE, IN NO POSITION TO JUDGE SIZE
OR QUALITY OF SUDANESE ASBESTOS RESERVES, BUT KUWAIT/SUDAN/
JOHNS MANVILLE VENTURE HAS AROUSED CONSIDERABLE EXCITEMENT
HERE AND IS LATEST SUBSTANTIAL MOVE BY KUWAITIS--IN THIS CASE
PRIVATE SECTOR--TO INVEST IN SUDAN.
MAU

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASBESTOS, MINING INDUSTRY, FOREIGN INVESTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976KUWAIT00681
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760049-1107
From: KUWAIT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760268/aaaaciau.tel
Line Count: 69
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ullricre
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 SEP 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 SEP 2004 by meiwc>; APPROVED <17 SEP 2004 by ullricre>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAJOR TRILATERAL INVESTMENT IN SUDAN ASBESTOS MINE ANNOUNCED.
TAGS: EINV, EMIN, KU, SU, JOHNS-MANVILLE CORP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006